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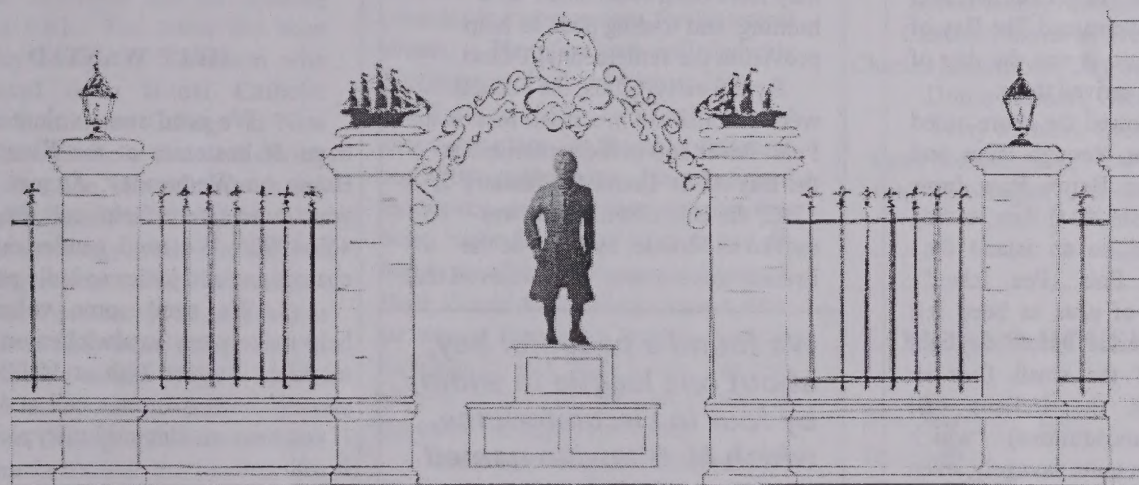
OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

AUGUST 1999

THE TIME HAS COME....

1699 – 1999



AUGUST HAPPENINGS

The monthly luncheon of the Hancock county Historical Society will not be held this month. Instead, we will celebrate the dedication of Tercentenary Park on the Feast Day of Saint Louis.

The dedication ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. on August 25 at the park located at 102 South Beach Boulevard next to Hancock Bank. We plan a relatively short program with even shorter speeches in consideration of the heat. Following the event, Historical Society members and other guests are invited to Loblano House
(Continued on page 3)

The Voyage of LeMarin Epilogue

Part eight of a 1999 series

On March 31, 1699, Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville returned to LeMarin, anchored at Ship Island since he and his party embarked on a month's exploration of the Mississippi River.

The night before, d'Iberville ordered a signal fire to be lit on shore to alert those on the ships of his return. Most scholars agree that the bonfires were set on the bluff of what would later be named Bay St. Louis. After returning to their frigates, the explorers continued the quest for a site for a French settlement.

On April 2, d'Iberville and d'Sauvolle, in smaller vessels called fellucas, made soundings along the coast. They visited a bay about nine leagues from Ship Island (the Bay of St. Louis). They liked the appearance of the bay with a bluff 31 feet above sea level, but the waters were too shallow for the frigates to approach shore.

Soundings continued along the entire Coast from the Pearl to the Pascagoula rivers and the Bay of Biloxi in the search for water deep enough for the larger vessels.

Finally on April 7, they found a seven-foot channel on Biloxi Bay and chose the bluff on the eastern shore

for their fort, even though the frigates would have to remain at Ship Island and transfer cargoes to smaller vessels to unload at the site.

Construction began April 8, and the fort was completed May 1. Two days later, d'Iberville, having accomplished his mission, left for France, leaving d'Sauvolle as commander at Fort Biloxi and other officers, including his brother, Jean Baptiste LeMoyne deBienville, in charge.

On August 25, Bienville left Biloxi to explore the lake route to the Mississippi River. His ship's carpenter, Andre Joseph Penicault, who chronicled the voyage, wrote of the arrival at Bay St. Louis:

We shortly afterward found a beautiful bay, about one league in width, by four in circumference, which M. Bienville named The Bay of St. Louis, because it was the day of St. Louis that we arrived there.

Bienville followed the shore aided by Indian guides, through lakes and passes, including Heron Pass (now called Grande Isle Pass) then leaving the sea, camped on an island they called Isle au Pois (Pea Island), because a sack of peas as been left there. They departed before daylight "on account of the small flies or Cousins, which the Indians call Maringouins (mosquitoes)... "which puncture the skin quite savagely, even to the drawing of blood...." Penicault reported.

"We shortly after entered a pass or strait which we called the rigolets (drains), which led to a lake... We called it Pointe aux Coquilles (shells), and the broad lake it contacted had already been named by M. d'Iberville, 'Pontchartrain.'

After further explorations, as far as the Tangipahoa River, the group returned to Pea Island and next day passed through some small passes that led to the sea three leagues away, near St. Louis Bay.

"We camped at the entrance to the Bay, near a fountain of water that flows from the hills, which M. deBienville named Belle Fontaine." A map by d'Anville, titled Carte de la

Louisiane, shows a fountain (spring or small creek) near the site of today's Bay St. Louis and is believed to be where Bookter Street is today. "We hunted several days on the shores of this bay. We filled our boats with the venison and buffalo that we killed, and next day brought them to our fort, Pericault reported.

In December one sergeant and 15 men were placed at the settlement in a small fort near where the Toulme mansion once stood on the beach between Carroll Avenue and DeMontluzin Street.

"There is no record of the reason for establishing this fort," said historian Scharff, "but the copious supply of game at the Bay of St. Louis and the near starvation conditions that prevailed at Biloxi, suggest that it may have been established as a hunting and trading post, to help provision the settlement at Biloxi.

By the early 1700s, the French were established in a small fort on the Pearl River and in the settlement at the Bay of St. Louis. On January 5, 1702, the Biloxi settlement was moved to Mobile, by order of the French government. It is believed that

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the forts at the Bay of St. Louis and the Pearl River were no longer needed and were abandoned and their personnel, like those at Biloxi, moved to a new location. No further accounts have been found about these outposts. Not only did the French leave the Hancock County area, but the Acolapissa Indians, to protect themselves from the slave raids of the and their Indian allies, moved in 1702 to a fortified location north of Lake Pontchartrain..

The population of the county began

to grow after the Louisiana Purchase by the United States government in 1803, with settlers moving west from the eastern shore. In the latter part of the 19th century, growth of Bay St. Louis was stimulated by the invention

of the steamboat and extension of the railroad, bringing visitors and settlers from New Orleans, seeking relief from heat and yellow fever epidemics as well as recreation and prosperity from economic opportunities in the lumber and seafood industries in fast-growing Mississippi Coast communities. Edith Back

References

Margry, Pierre, *A Chapter from Memoirs and Documents*, translated by Henry deville du Sinclair. Higginbotham, Jay, translator & editor, *The Journal of Sauvole*, Colonial Books, Mobile, 1969. Scharff, Robert G., *Louisiana's Loss, Mississippi's Gain*, Brunswick Publishing Co., 1999.

HELP WANTED

We need some volunteers to be hosts & hostesses at the Kate Lobrano House on Wednesday, August 25th. If you would like to help, call the office at 467-4090. We need gentlemen to pour champagne and ladies to ladle punch.

We need some volunteers to help make party sandwiches on Tuesday morning, August 24th at 10:00 a.m. If you can help, give us a call at 467-4090. If you have an electric knife, please bring it with you.

We need volunteers on Monday, August 23rd to prepare the Kate Lobrano house for the Champagne reception. This will entail putting things away, dusting, vacuuming etc. This should not take more than an hour.

One last request, if anyone would like to donate a pan of brownies or cookies, please drop them off at Lobrano on Tuesday morning, August 24th. It would help if you call and tell you will be bringing them to help us plan additional purchases.

We are looking forward to a gala event that will show off the Kate Lobrano House and the Hancock County Historical Society and our always generous membership. This will be a proud day for our society and will be well recorded for posterity.

(President from page 1)

or hors d'oeuvre and champagne or punch. Whatever the weather condition, this is an event you will not want to miss – it only happens every three hundred years.

On August 25, 1297, Louis IX of France was canonized for leading both the First and Second Crusades into the Holy Land, thus establishing the Feast Day of Saint Louis.

Four hundred and two years later, on August 25, 1699 a small party of French explorers lead by Jean Baptiste LeMoyne, Sieur de Bienville entered and explored a "beautiful bay" that he named the Bay of Saint Louis.

And now, three hundred years after that historic happening, we will celebrate the event by dedicating a life-size bronze statue of M. Bienville and by opening Tercentenary Park. The statue has been sculptured by Mary Ott Davidson who was graduated from Biloxi Catholic schools and Dominican College in New Orleans. She became a nun and during her training as a nun, she was introduced to photography, paint and sculpture. She taught in the inner city while working on a graduate degree in art from Tulane University. She then accepted a position teaching in Zurich, Switzerland.

After returning to the United States, she received a second graduate degree from Vermont College of Norwich University before becoming the head of the art department at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Jeff Davis campus.

She sculptured Bienville's older brother, Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur de Iberville for the city of Biloxi. It was he who ordered the construction of Fort Maurepas at old Biloxi before he returned to France in May 1699. The statue stands near the Biloxi Lighthouse.

We felt it was appropriate to honor the younger LeMoyne brother, Bienville, who remained on the Gulf Coast for the better part of 46 years. Bienville, after all, founded the cities of Bay Saint Louis, Mobile, "New" Biloxi and New Orleans.

After work was started on the Bienville statue, Mary agreed to sculpture a crest for the city of Bay Saint Louis as well as bas relief replicas of *Le Marin*

and *La Badine*, Iberville and Bienville's ships respectively. These three pieces will adorn the columns at the entrance to Tercentenary Park.

Please attend. This is an historic event that your children will someday study and you can say, "I was there".

Charles Gray

TERCENTENARY PARK

"tercentenary \ ter-sent-n-er-e\ noun, a 300th anniversary or its celebration – tercentenary adj. (1855)" Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, Copyright Merriam-Webster 1991

There is another "T" word that appears in some later dictionaries but because of its brash youthfulness we consider it inappropriate for historical events. Therefore, we will dedicate Tercentenary Park on August 25th.

Early in 1998, Leo Seal inquired about our plans for the celebration of our 300th anniversary. He mentioned the bronze statue of Iberville that was being made for Biloxi's beach and offered use of the park next to Hancock Bank should we decide to have a similar one of Iberville's brother Bienville made for Bay Saint Louis. He also offered to pay half the cost of having the statue designed and cast.

When approached on the subject, Mayor Favre and the Bay Saint Louis City Council agreed to assume financial responsibility for the other half. The city and Hancock Bank also agreed to jointly provide necessary labor and materials for the pedestal.

The Historical Society sold granite plaques and bricks for the pedestal surface and for walkways by having them engraved with sponsors' names. It also commissioned the making of the replicas of *Le Marin* and *La Badine* for the two center columns, lanterns for the two outer columns as well as the crest for the center of the entranceway.

Therefore a special thanks to Leo Seal, Hancock Bank and its directors, Hancock Bank Superintendent Facilities Maintenance David Marshall, Mayor Edward Favre, Councilmen

Carleen Murphy Moran, James Thriffley III, Connie Payne Lampley, Tad Black and James Rutherford, Public Works Director Ronald Vanney, Bay Saint Louis Cultural Affairs Director Mike Cuevas, Hancock County Supervisors Jeep Ladner, Rocky Pullman, Lisa Cowan, Steve Seamour, Philip Moran and Chancery Clerk Tim Kellar. Many thanks.

NEW MEMBERS

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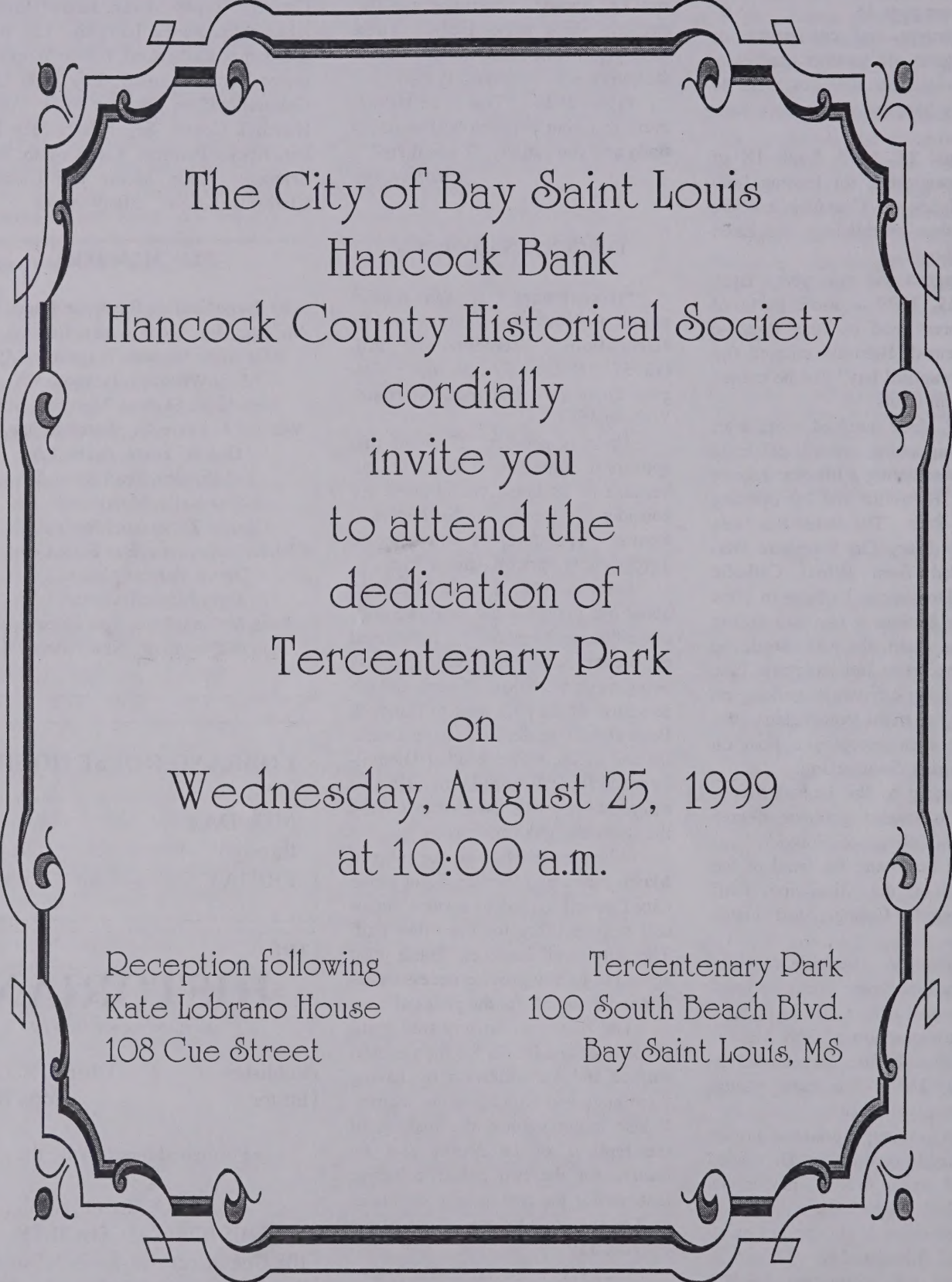
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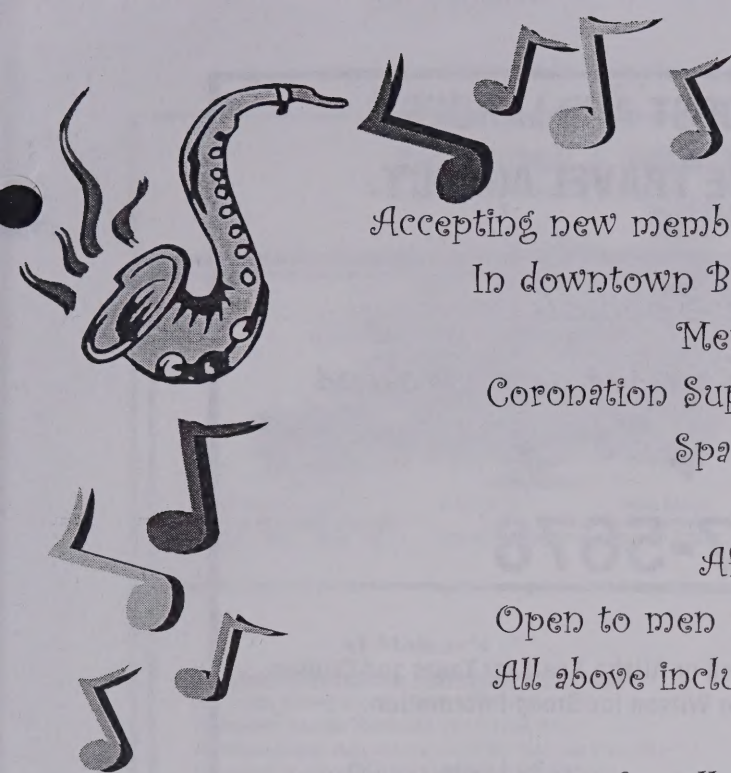
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The City of Bay Saint Louis
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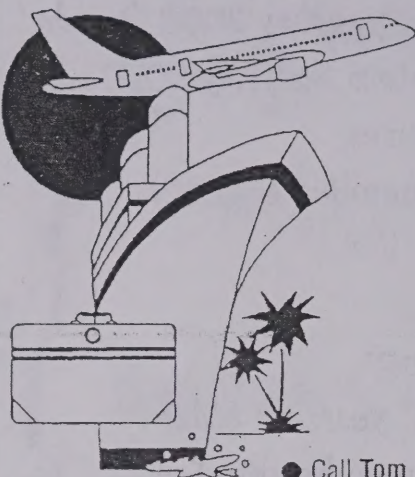
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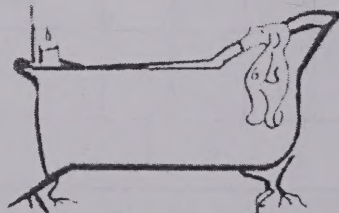
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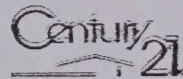
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


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